

REMARKS

By the present amendment, the specification, the claims and the drawings have been amended for clarifications, as detailed below.

As a preliminary, on page 5 of the Office Action, the specification is objected to for referring to claim numbers.

This defect has been corrected by adding the text of the claims. Accordingly, it is submitted that the objection should be withdrawn.

Further, on page 5 of the Office Action, the drawings are objected to. It is alleged that the lateral clamping of the suction pipes recited in claim 2 is not shown in the Figures, that reference characters in Figs. 2 and 4 appear to be incorrect, and that Figs. 14, 15 and 22 appear to be identical.

The reference to the suction pipes has been deleted in claim 2, the reference numbers have been corrected in the paragraph starting on page 3, line 17, to correspond to the reference numbers indicated in Figs. 2-4, and Figs. 15 and 22 have been deleted. Accordingly, it is submitted that the objections should be withdrawn.

Next, on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 3, 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, for lack of enablement. It is alleged in the Office Action that the "small plate" in claim 3, the "manual interface" in claim 10, and the "automatic interfaces" in claim 11 are not sufficiently described.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. The nature and

the function of the "small plate" are described on page 5, fourth full paragraph, and shown in a planar view on Fig. 13 (alone) and in a cross-section view on original Figs. 19-21, now renumbered Fig. 18 (mounted in the profile section). Further, the manual and automatic interfaces are described in details on page 5, first two full paragraphs, and shown schematically in the Figures referred to in this passage, in particular Fig. 14 which shows an embodiment of a clamping interface as described on page 5.

These descriptions and illustrations are sufficient to enable a person of the art to fully understand these portions of the disclosure. Therefore, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Next, on pages 2-3 the Office Action, claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. It is alleged in the Office Action that "the ball joints" in claim 1, "the assembly" in claims 4-7, "the extension pieces" in claim 5, "the angle" in claim 9, and "the center" in claim 12, lack antecedent basis, and that the term "for example" in claim 4 renders the claim unclear.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. The claims have been amended to provide antecedent basis for each term of the claims and to delete "for example" in claim 4. Accordingly, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Next, on pages 3-4 of the Office Action, claims 1, 3-5, 8 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by US 4,129,328 (Littell), claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Littel in view of US 5,135,276 (Blatt), and claims 6 and 7 are rejected

the function of the "small plate" are described on page 5, fourth full paragraph, and shown in a planar view on Fig. 13 (alone) and in a cross-section view on original Figs. 19-21, now renumbered Fig. 18 (mounted in the profile section). Further, the manual and automatic interfaces are described in details on page 5, first two full paragraphs, and shown schematically in the Figures referred to in this passage, in particular Fig. 14 which shows an embodiment of a clamping interface as described on page 5.

These descriptions and illustrations are sufficient to enable a person of the art to fully understand these portions of the disclosure. Therefore, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Next, on pages 2-3 the Office Action, claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. It is alleged in the Office Action that "the ball joints" in claim 1, "the assembly" in claims 4-7, "the extension pieces" in claim 5, "the angle" in claim 9, and "the center" in claim 12, lack antecedent basis, and that the term "for example" in claim 4 renders the claim unclear.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. The claims have been amended to provide antecedent basis for each term of the claims and to delete "for example" in claim 4. Accordingly, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Next, on pages 3-4 of the Office Action, claims 1, 3-5, 8 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by US 4,129,328 (Littell), claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Littel in view of US 5,135,276 (Blatt), and claims 6 and 7 are rejected

under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Littel in view of US 5,688,008 (Hansch).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested. In the presently claimed invention, the air chokes are attached to the profile sections through longitudinally extending supports mounted at the ends of these profile sections by ball and socket bearings, the air chokes being affixed to the ends of these supports, as recited in present claim 1.

An effect of this construction is that it enables an angular clearance of the air chokes, as recited in claim 1. An advantage of this construction is that the forces applied on the air chokes can be better compensated because the supports are able to remain in the adhesion axis of the air chokes, which results in a very stable and rigid construction.

In contrast, in Littell, the suction cups are affixed to longitudinal supports by a ball and socket bearing, the longitudinal supports being attached to the profile sections through a sliding sleeve. Thus, in Littell, the supports have a fixed angle with respect to the profile sections. As a result, not only is the clearance afforded by the present invention absent, but also, the supports must compensate the efforts applied on the suction cups while they are positioned at an angle defined by the position of the ball and socket bearing. This angle is detrimental to the rigidity and solidity of the construction.

In summary, Littell fails to teach or suggest the presently claimed construction as recited in present claim 1. Therefore, the present claims are not anticipated by Littell and not obvious over the cited combinations of references including Littell.

In addition, with respect to claim 6, it is submitted that present claim 6 recites that the

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supports each comprise a rod which is slidable into a piece with a shape of a ball which is mounted in the ball and socket bearing, and a spring is mounted between the rod and the piece with a shape of a ball.

In contrast, in Hansch, the ball and socket bearing is slidable in a housing of the profile section, and the spring is mounted between the support and the profile section, which limits the extendability and the response of the spring. Therefore, for this reason alone, claim 6 is not obvious over the cited combination of references.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejections should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, the invention as presently claimed is patentable. It is believed that the claims are in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

In the event there is, in the Examiner's opinion, any outstanding issue and such issue may be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of the response period. Please charge the fee for such extension and any other fees which may be required to our Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN & HATTORI, LLP

By: _____



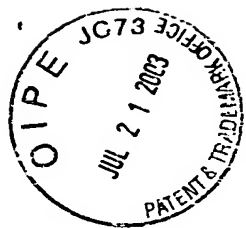
Nicolas E. Seckel
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 44,373

Atty. Docket No. 020017
Suite 1000
1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
Tel: (202) 659-2930
Fax: (202) 887-0357

NES:rep

Encls.: Nine (9) substitute sheets of drawings
 Nine (9) marked-up copies
 Petition for two-month extension of time

#9



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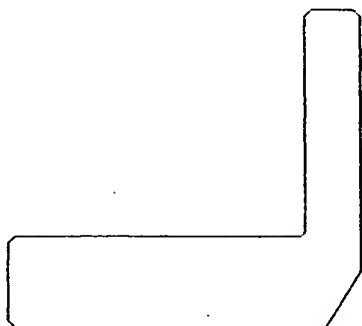


FIGURE 16

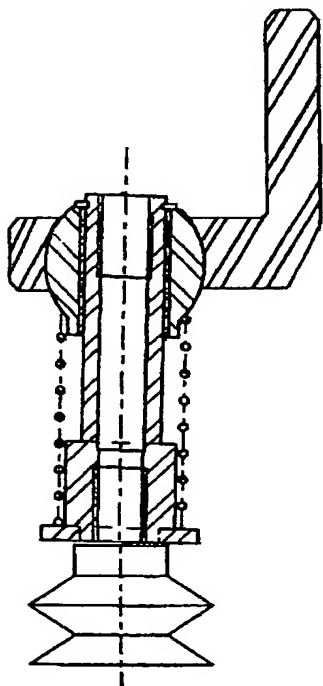


FIGURE 15

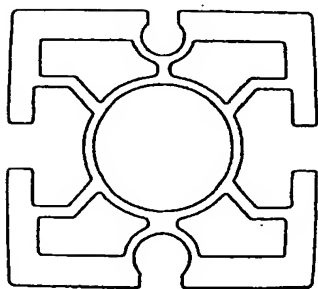


FIGURE 17



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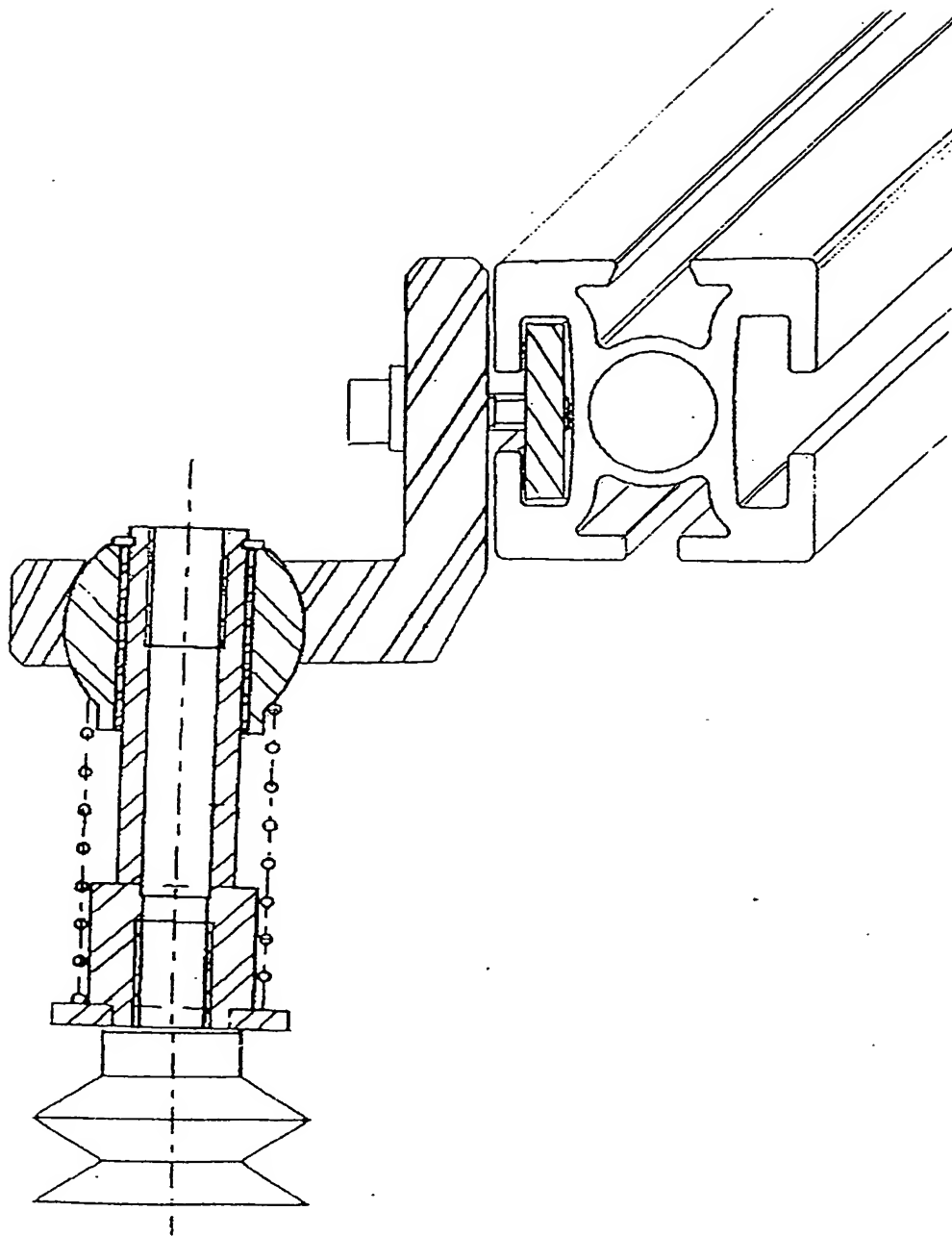
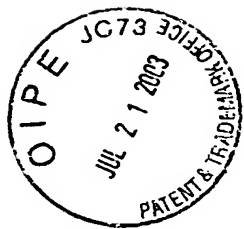


FIGURE 18



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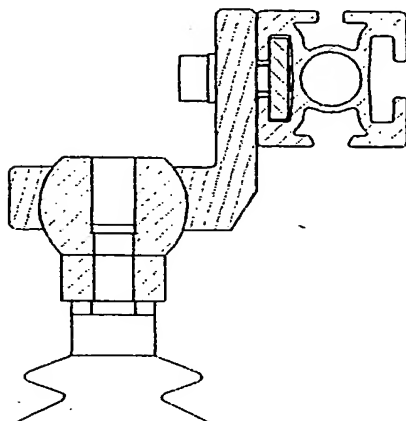


FIGURE 19

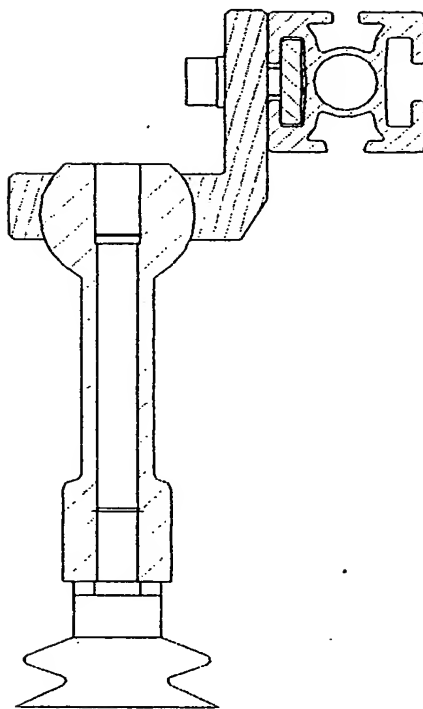


FIGURE 20



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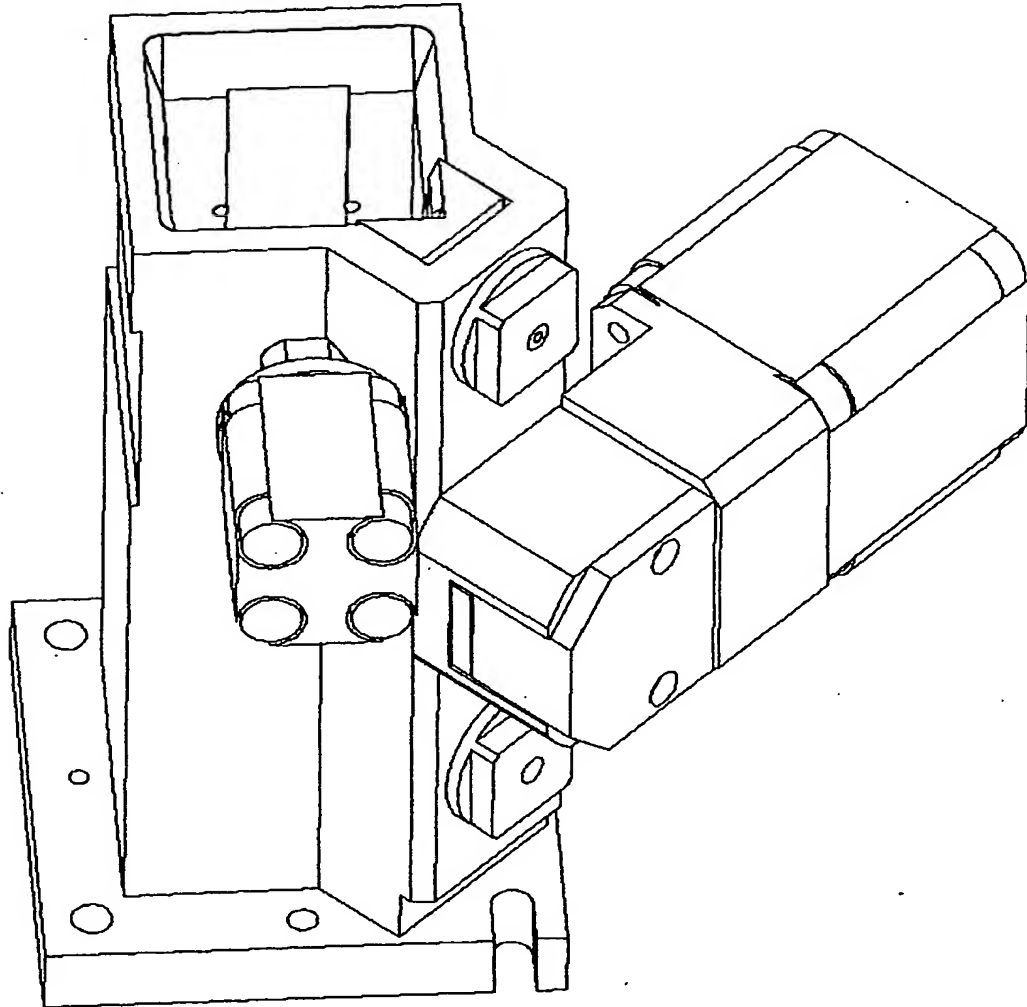
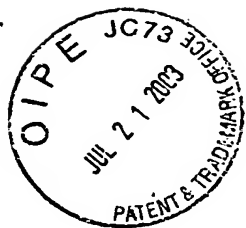


FIGURE 21



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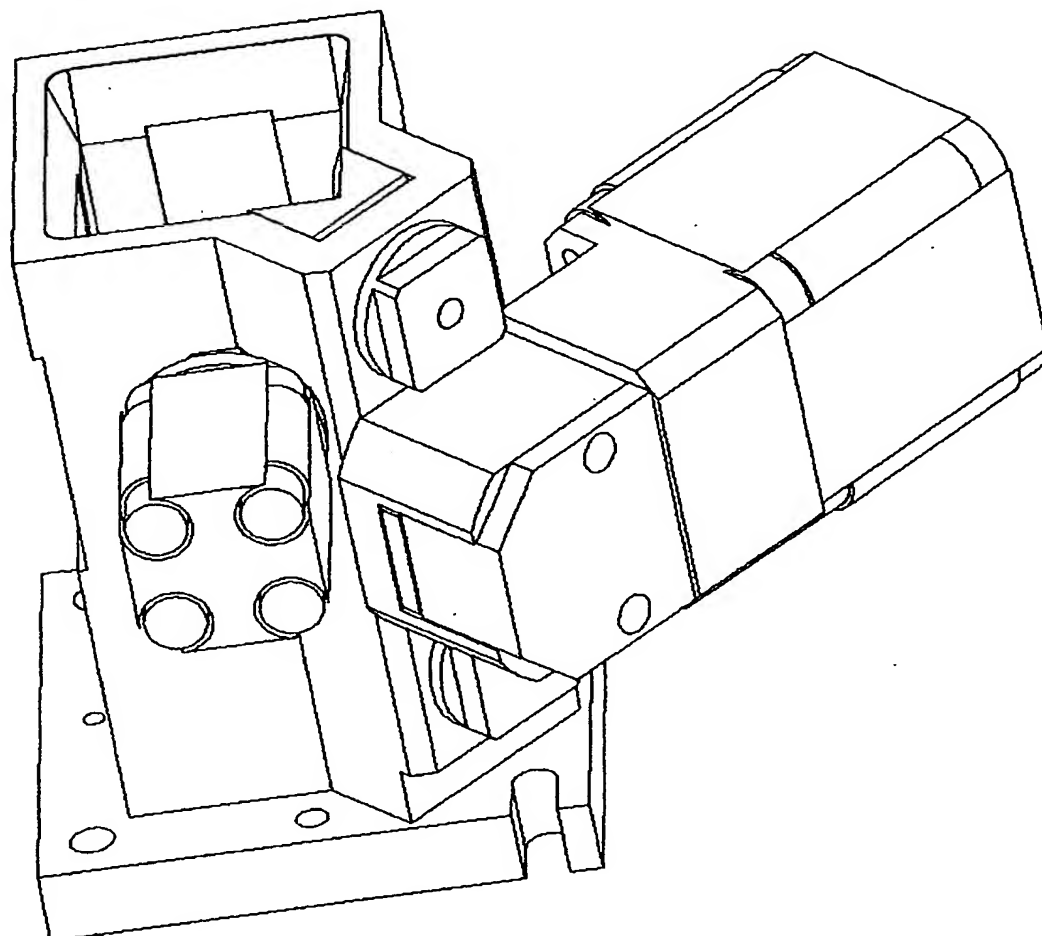
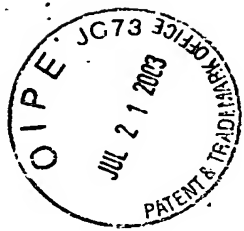


FIGURE 22



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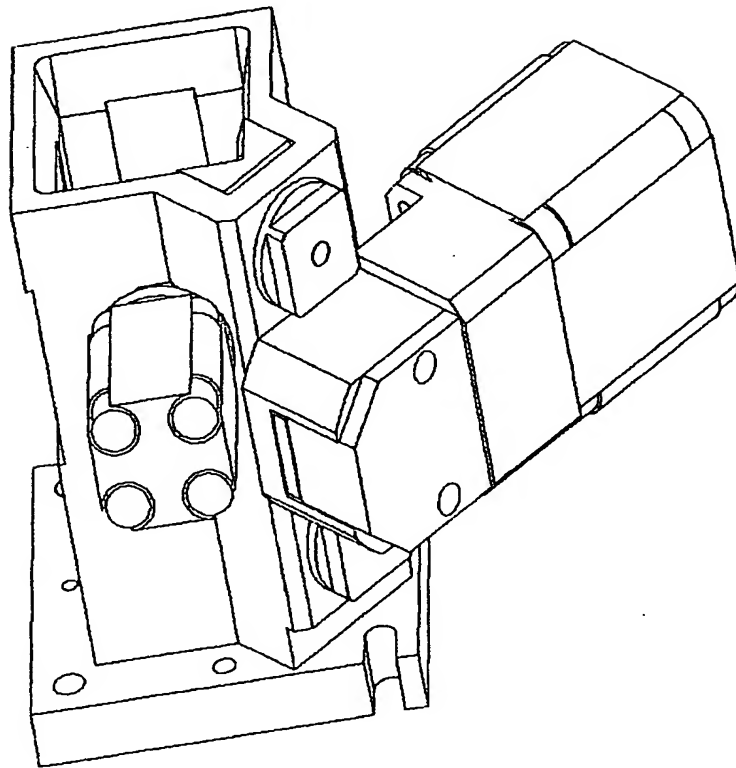
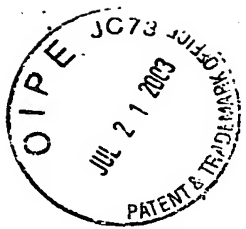


FIGURE 23



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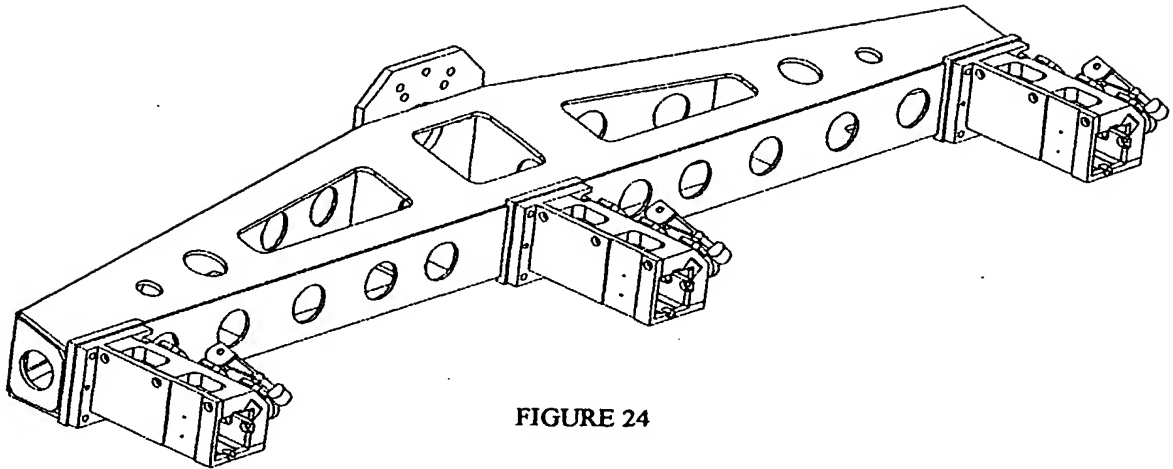


FIGURE 24

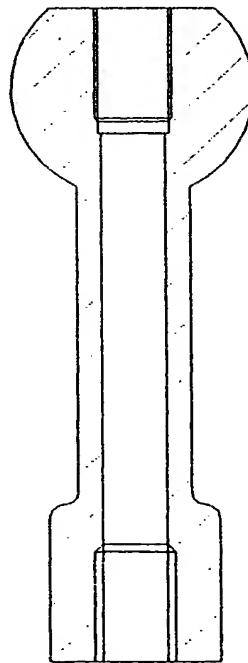
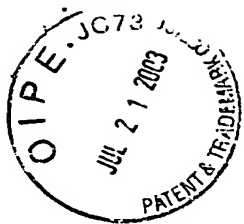


FIGURE 25



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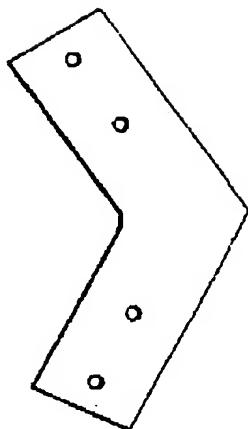


FIGURE 26

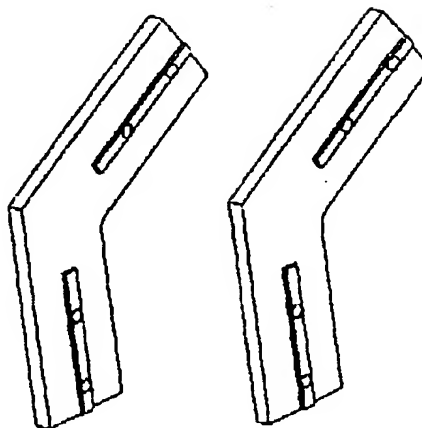


FIGURE 27

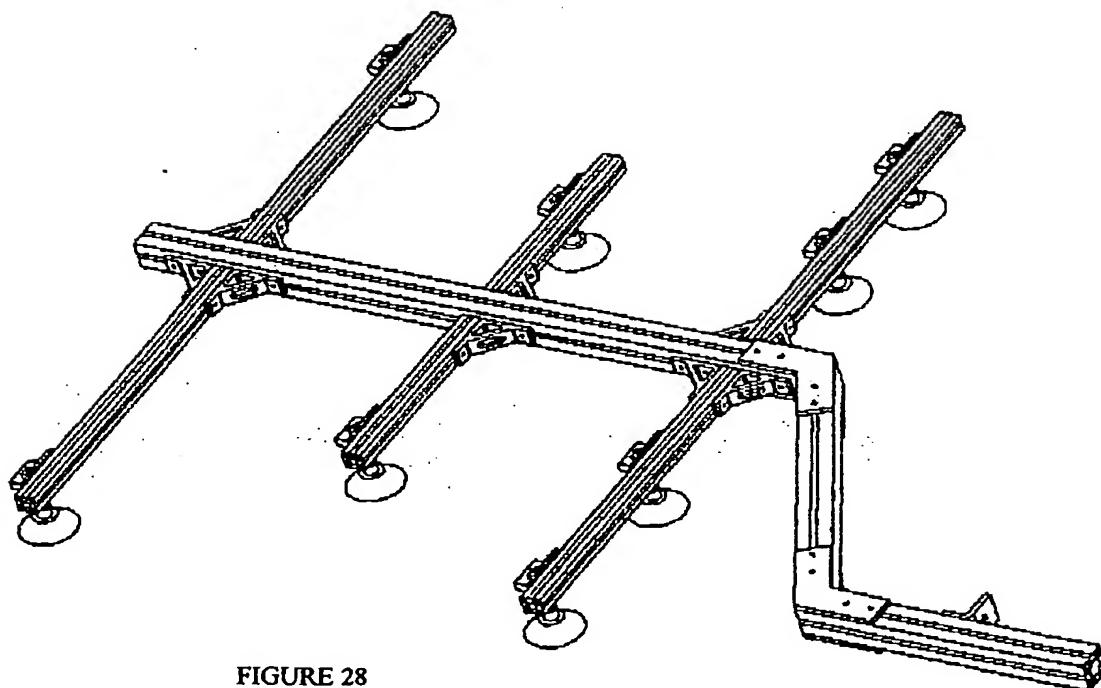
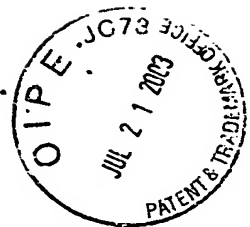


FIGURE 28



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Response to Office Action of Feb. 26, 2003
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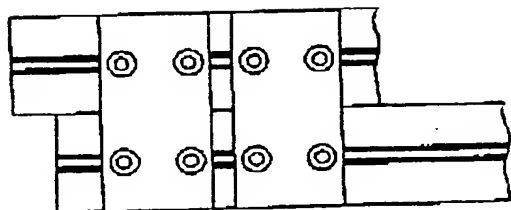


FIGURE 29

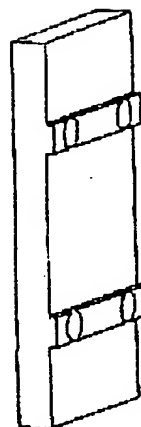


FIGURE 30

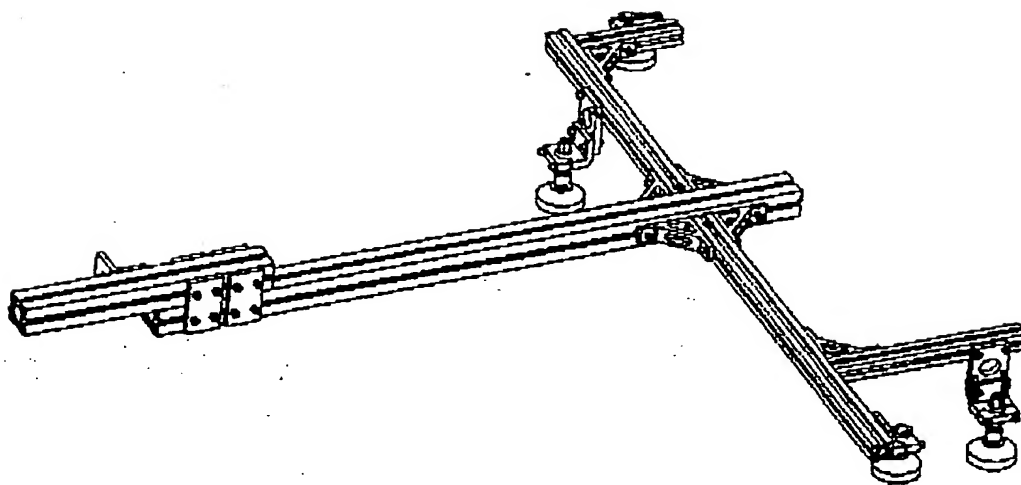
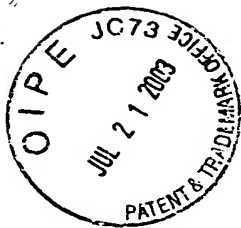
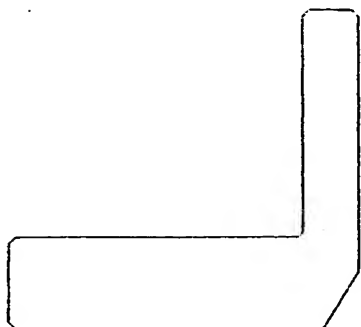


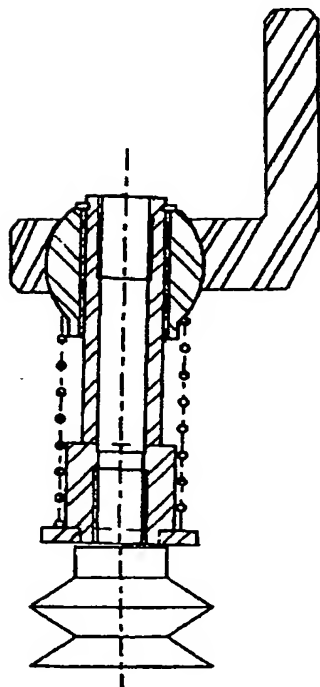
FIGURE 31



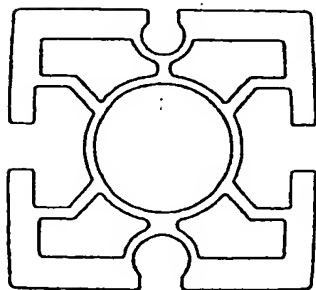
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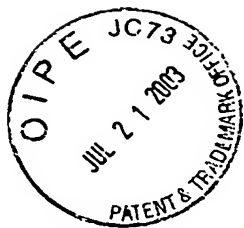
¹⁶
FIGURE 16



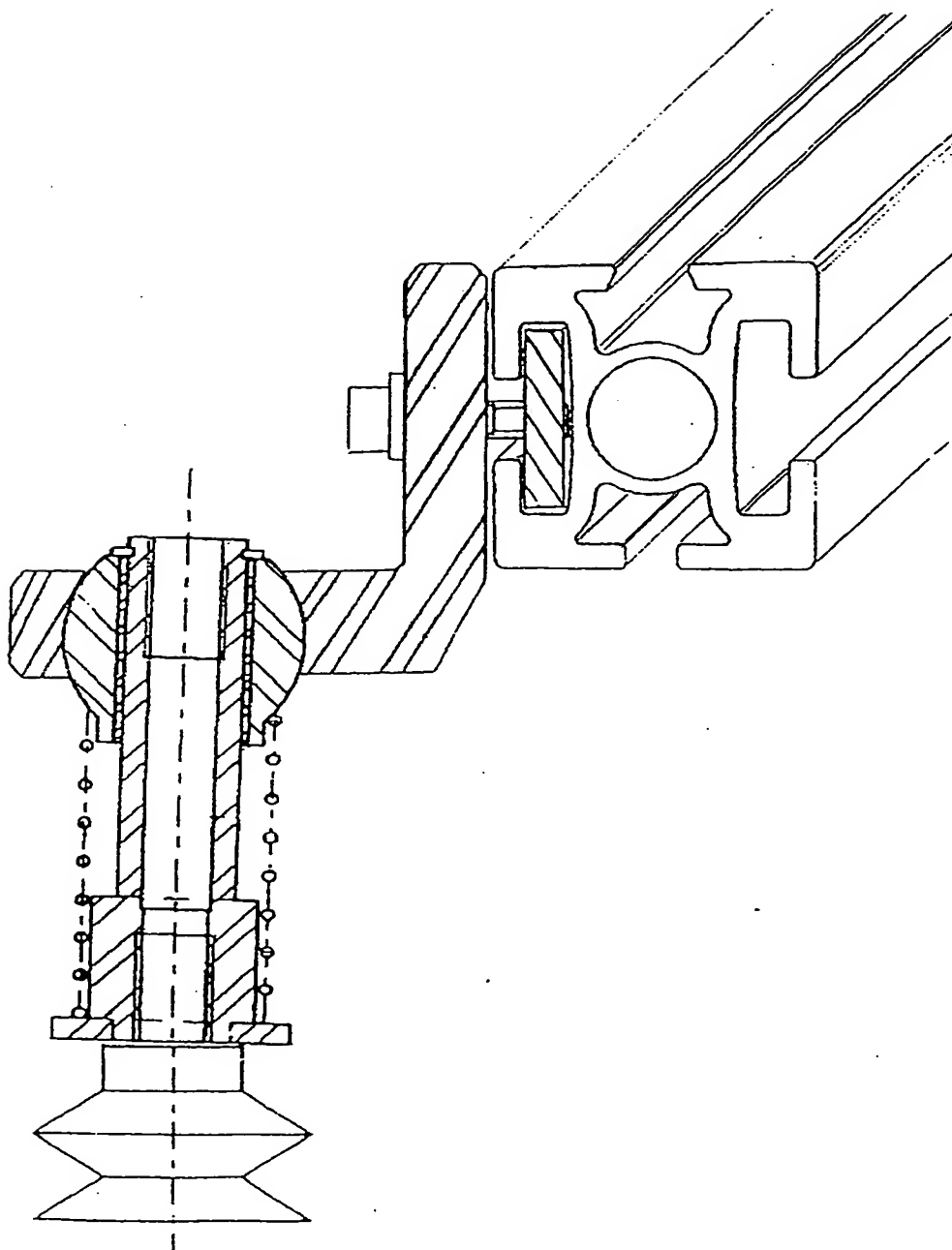
¹⁵
FIGURE 15



¹⁷
FIGURE 17



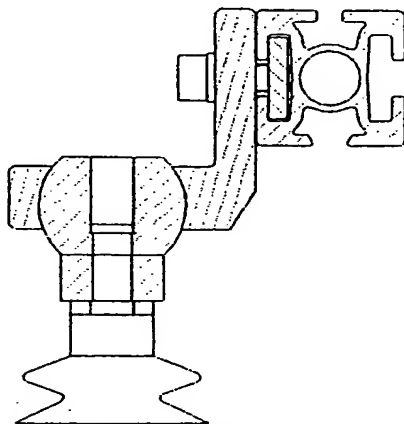
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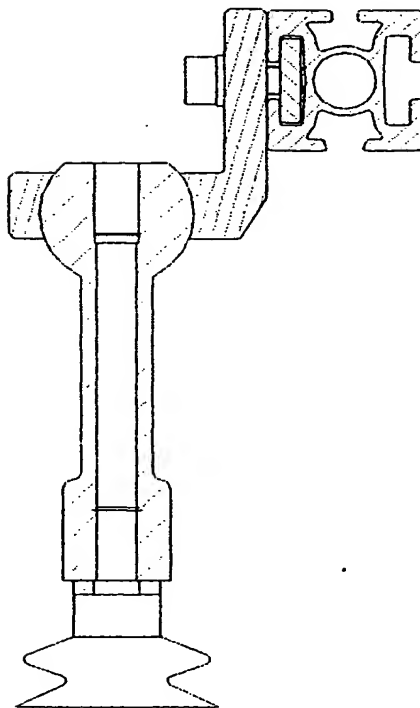
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FIGURE 18



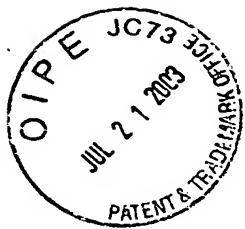
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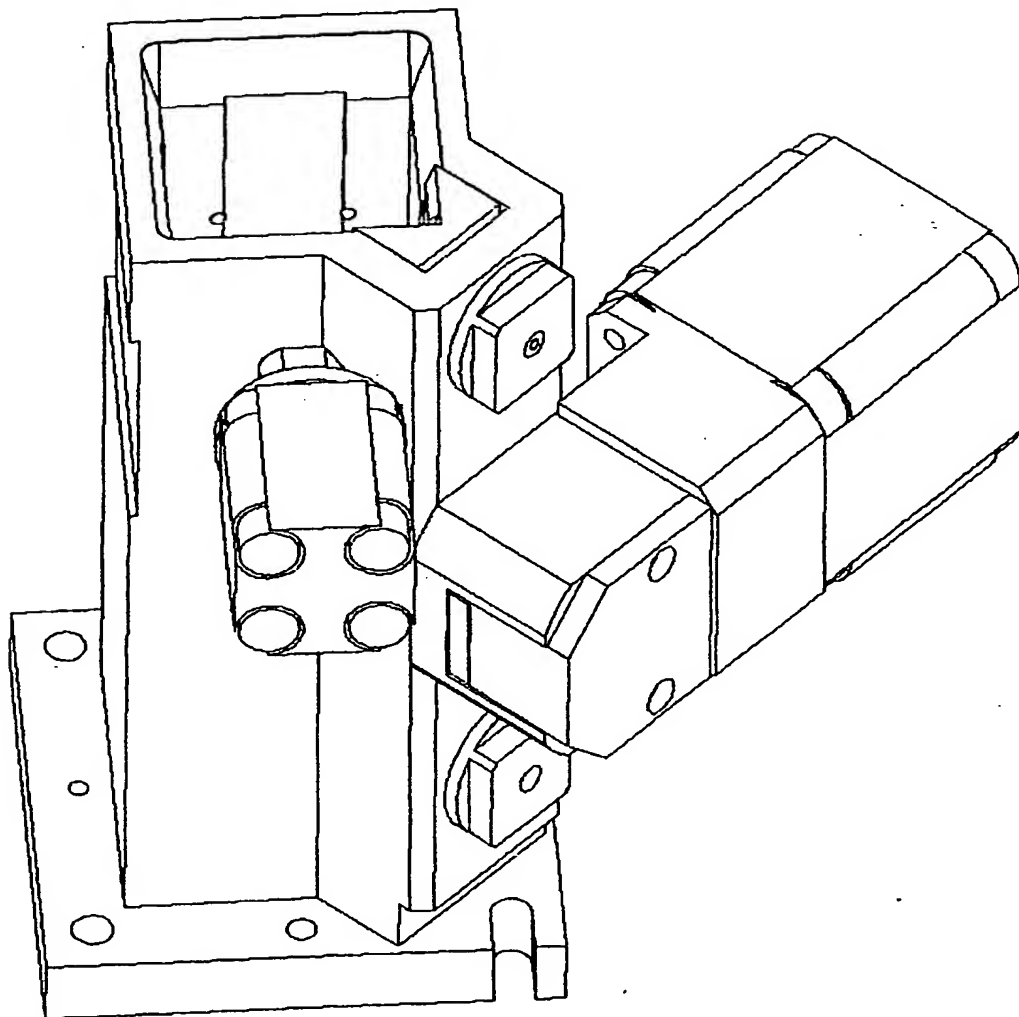
²⁰
FIGURE 19



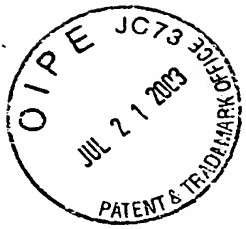
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FIGURE 20



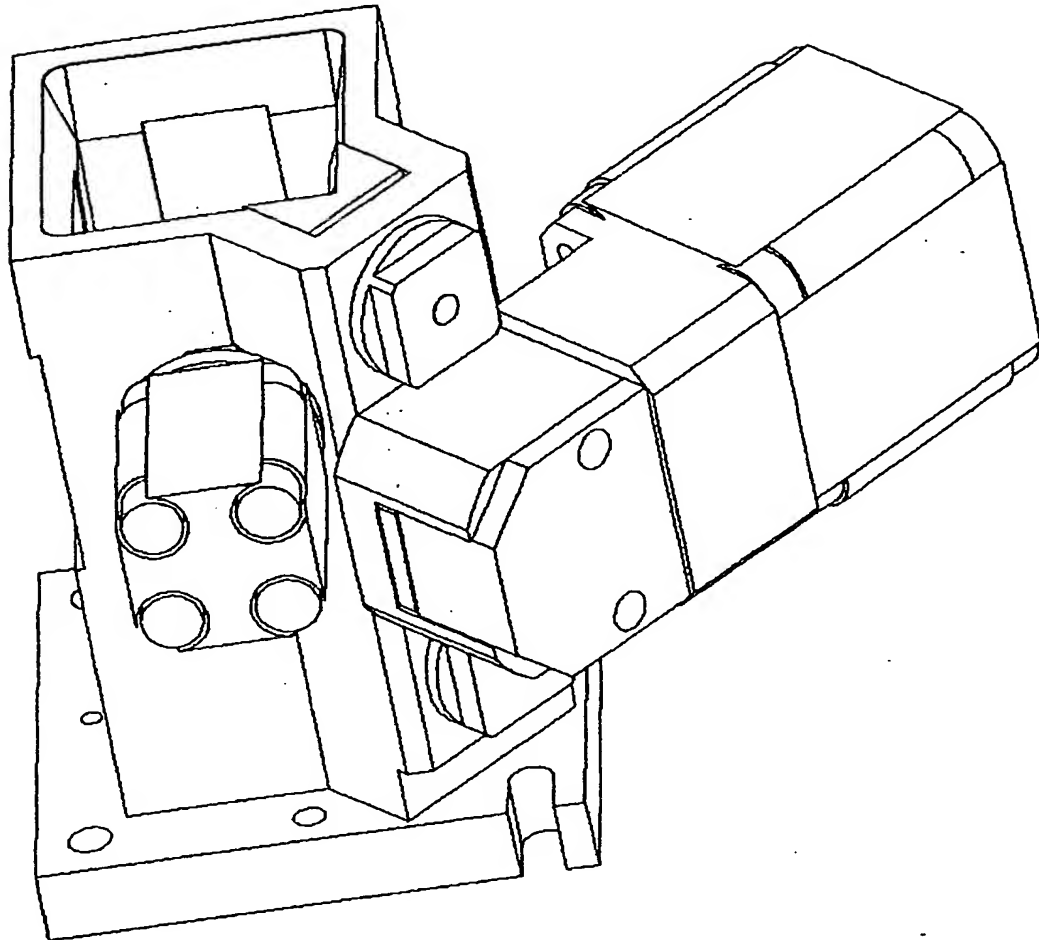
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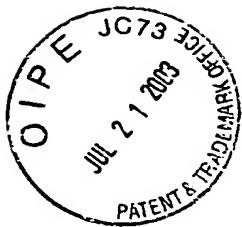
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FIGURE 21



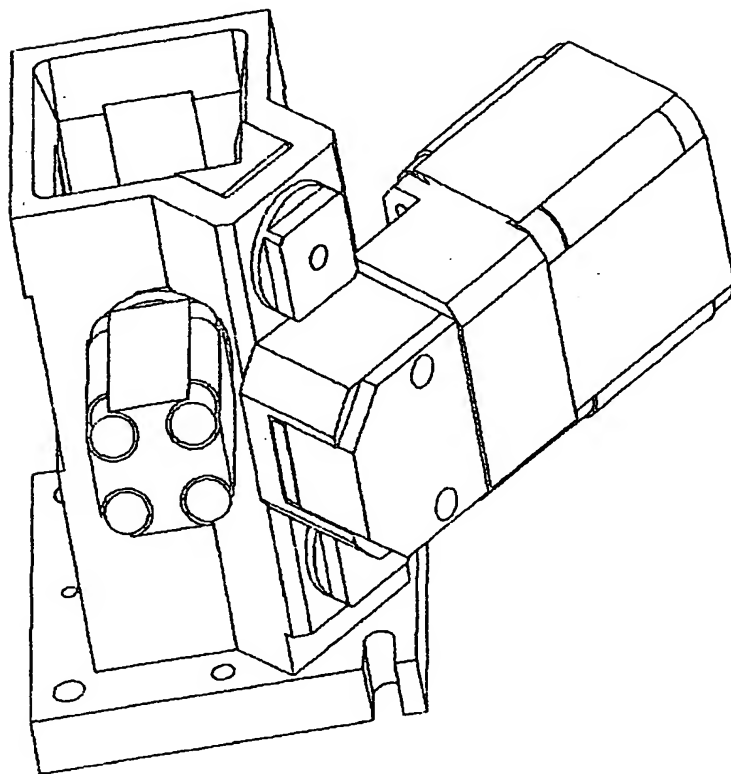
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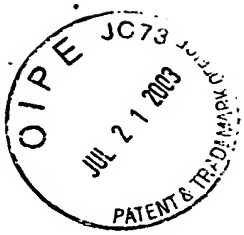
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FIGURE 22
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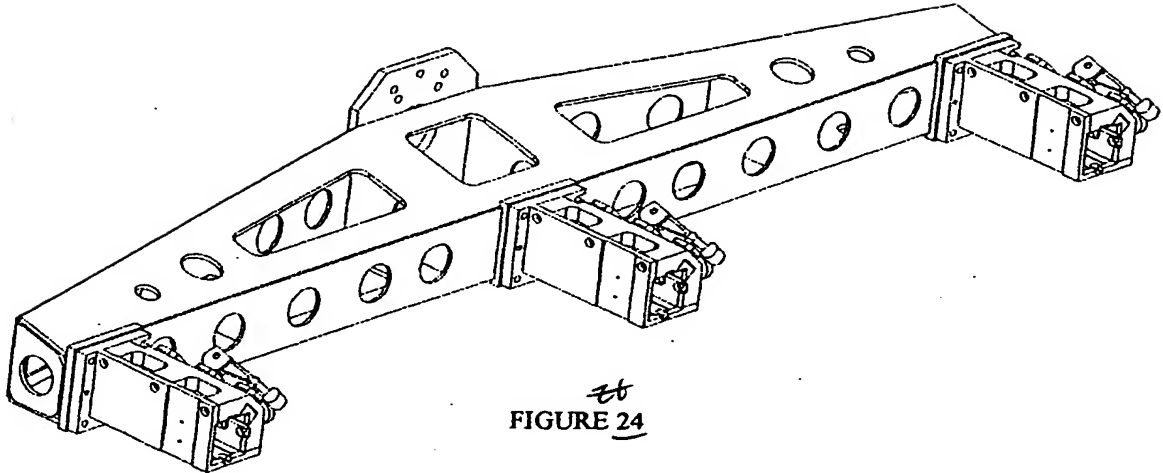
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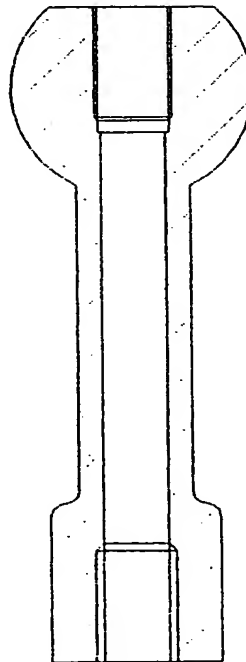
²⁸
FIGURE 23



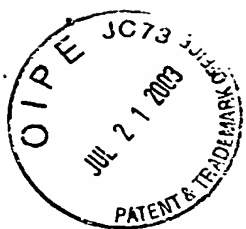
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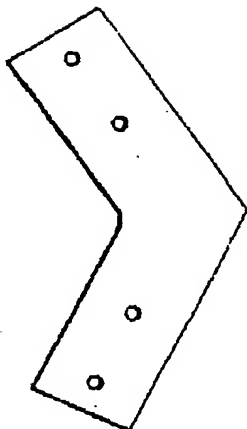
²⁴
FIGURE 24



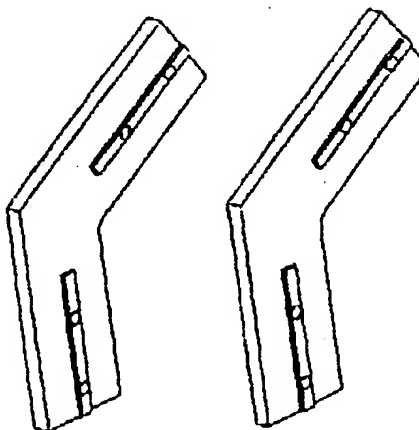
²⁵
FIGURE 25



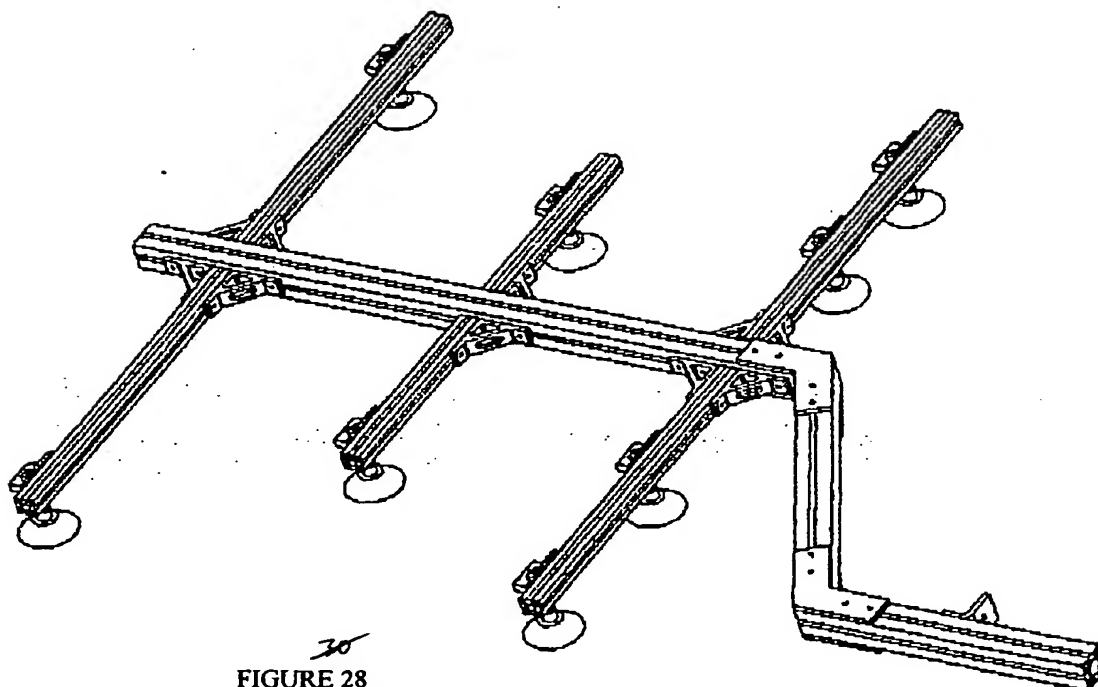
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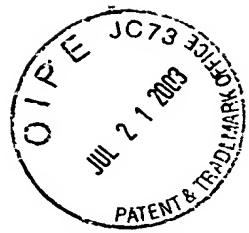
²⁶
FIGURE 26



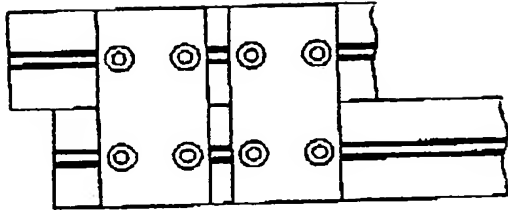
²⁷
FIGURE 27



²⁸
FIGURE 28



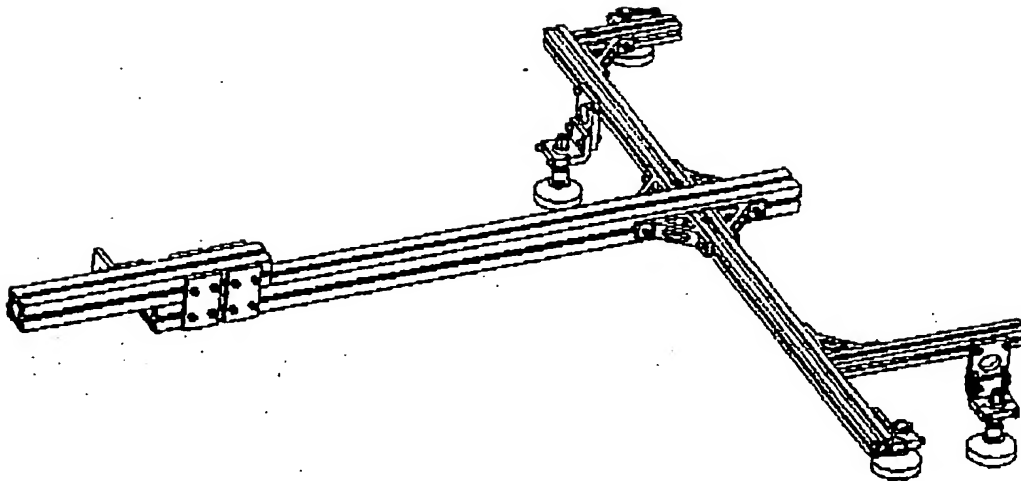
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~~31~~
FIGURE 29



~~32~~
FIGURE 30



~~33~~
FIGURE 31